



Make Family Health History a Tradition

When to Get a Genetic Consultation

After collecting your family health history, you may be concerned that you have an increased risk for developing a health problem. Most people do not have a high risk for a health problem based on their family health history. But in some cases, it may be appropriate for them to talk with a genetic counselor or other trained specialist. Genetic testing may also be an option for some families. You should always share your concerns with your doctor before seeking any testing.

Who should talk to a genetic counselor?

If your family has one of more of these features, there may be an increased risk of developing a health problem. In this case, you need to share your concerns with your doctor and possibly talk with a genetic counselor.

- Health problems that occur at an earlier age than expected (10 to 20 years before most people get the disease)
- A health problem in more than one close family member
- A health problem that does not usually affect a certain gender (for example, breast cancer in a male family member)
- Certain combinations of health problems within a family (for example, breast and ovarian cancer or heart disease and diabetes)
- Birth defects, growth or development problems, pregnancy concerns, and other known genetic conditions in the family

What will I learn from a genetic counselor?

A genetic counselor will help you:

- Assess your risk for a health problem based on your family health history
- Diagnose a health problem and causes for it
- Decide if genetic testing is an option
- Give you facts about treatment or management of the problem
- Refer you and your family members to support groups and resources

Where can I learn more?

Huntsman Cancer Institute, www.huntsmancancer.org

- For an appointment with a genetic counselor, call the Family Cancer Assessment Clinic at 801-587-9555
- For other questions, call 801-585-0100 or toll-free 866-275-0243

Intermountain Health Care, Clinical Genetics Institute

- For questions or to speak with a genetic specialist, call 801-408-5014

University of Utah Hospital

- For genetic counseling and patient care issues, call 801-581-8943

March of Dimes website, www.marchofdimes.com

Family Health History Toolkit
www.health.utah.gov/genomics